



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*** AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK EDITORIAL ***

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American Education Week is a time to focus on public education

By State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster

Wisconsin will join the nation in celebrating public education during the 85th annual American Education Week observance, Nov. 12-18. This year's American Education Week theme, *Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility*, focuses our attention on the importance of providing our children with a quality education and the responsibility we share for educating our nation's youth.

Our Wisconsin Constitution requires school districts to provide schools that are "free and without tuition" to children between the ages of 4 and 20. Throughout our state, locally elected school boards embrace this responsibility. They work in partnerships with their communities to create schools that educate and train our children so they are ready to become active citizens who understand their roles in the family, society, and the world of work.

From the establishment of our country's first kindergarten over 150 years ago, to nation-leading performance on college admission tests *this* year, Wisconsin strives to provide a world-class education to every child. Our teachers and administrators create welcoming learning environments in every school and will continue those efforts as they work on continuous improvement across all grade levels to ensure that every child receives a quality education.

All of our efforts focus on helping our students to graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in postsecondary studies, the high-skills workplace, and as leaders in our global economy. As well as we do educating our children, there is much work to do to close the achievement gap and educate tomorrow's youth with the 21st century skills they need for their future.

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During American Education Week, I encourage all citizens to reflect on the importance of our public schools and the valuable contribution they make in sustaining our democracy and our American way of life.

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Elizabeth Burmaster is the elected state superintendent of public instruction.

NOTES: The state superintendent's new photo is available for download on the web. A high-resolution photo is available on the Department of Public Instruction "Media Contacts and Resources" webpage at < <http://dpi.wisconsin.gov/eis/vm-media.html> >.

This American Education Week editorial is available electronically at < http://www.dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2006_146.pdf >. The state superintendent's 2006 American Education Week proclamation is available at < <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/aewproc06.pdf> >.